

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1109815

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015
FOR
REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST**

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REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015**

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REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The Committee, when complete, consists of at least three and not more than nine individuals serving as Trustees, all of whom must be members (but must not be paid employees) of the Association. The Committee is made up of up to seven members, each elected to serve for 3 years, and up to two members co opted by the Committee to hold office until the next AGM.

The membership of the organisation is determined by the Constitution as are the rules for electing its Trustees. Full Membership of the organisation is open to any refugee community organisation interested in promoting the objects whose application for membership has been approved by Trustees and ratified by the full membership at a general meeting. Trustees must belong to a member organisation. All member organisations may nominate representatives of any member organisation to stand for election to Committee. Each member organisation has 2 votes to exercise in an election. A third of the members of the committee retire from office at the end of each AGM, but they may stand for re-election. Officers are elected by the Trustees at their first meeting following the AGM. Trustees can also appoint Advisors as they see fit. Advisors serve in a non-voting capacity.

Only one member of any member organisation can serve as a Trustee at any one time. Trustees do not serve on the committee as representatives of their member organisation, but are elected to serve the interests of the whole membership. Trustees bring with them the experience of serving a member organisation. They are elected on the basis of their individual skills, expertise and commitment to service and support the aims of the organisation and interests of the whole community of refugees and asylum seekers in the region.

Trustees dedicate their time and expertise voluntarily to the organisation.

Induction and training of new trustees

Trustees elected at the AGM attend an Induction Day with those continuing to serve and outgoing trustees to provide an opportunity to visit the objectives, values and principles of the organisation and consider its strengths and the opportunities and challenges faced. Senior staff provide a briefing on the Annual Plan and budget.

Training suitable to meet the needs identified by Trustees can be organised at any time throughout the year.

Organisational structure

The Trustees are tasked with overseeing the development and implementation of the organisation's Annual Plan, ensuring that it is rooted in the needs and priorities of the membership. Trustees carry responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is run according to its Constitution, adopted policies and procedures, legal requirements and within its financial means and the agreements made with our funders.

During the reporting period the Trustees employed 2 staff. The Chief Executive Officer (who is the Senior Staff member), and the Project Manager. The CEO has responsibility for day to day management of staff, activities and expenditure according to grant agreements. The CEO produces written reports which detail work in progress towards targets and refer a range of issues to the Trustees for consideration and decisions, which are presented to the chair and trustees. Trustees are responsible for final decisions relating to contracts, funding, recruitment, and employment issues.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Related parties

Community sector relations:

The Organisation is related to refugee-led community organisations (RCOs) (some of which are registered charities) active across the North East region through their membership of the organisation or through their participation in our activities. Trustees are elected by the membership from the membership, and therefore our Trustees are all also members of member organisations. We also maintain communications with non-refugee new migrant community groups, particularly from Eastern Europe.

Voluntary sector relations:

The charity has a special relationship with the North of England Refugee Service Ltd as the two organisations complement each other's work; NERS as the regional refugee council and service delivery organisation, and our charity as the independent consumer and advocate voice. At a national level we communicate with the Refugee Council and are members of the national Still Human Still Here campaign coalition. Where appropriate to pursue our objectives, we create regional campaigns alliances with interested bodies. We pursue a mainstreaming agenda in relation to VONNE and the region's Local Development Agencies and other infrastructure and capacity networks so that the capacity building needs of RCO's are addressed. We are a member of ECRE (European Council on Refugees and Exile), which focuses its advocacy on reception and integration policy and practice determined at the European level.

Public Sector relations:

We work to develop constructive and collaborative direct engagement processes with public sector bodies who have a role in developing policy and in commissioning and delivering local services. Our willingness to proactively enter into on-going, open conversation as to potential issues impacting on asylum seekers and refugees, focusing on solutions rather than 'blame', has been identified as a significant positive for improving access to services.

We also work closely with the North East Migration Partnership, established in December 2014 under an enabling grant from the Home Office. Led by Middlesbrough Council, the Partnership is a local authority led collaboration of organisations across the statutory and voluntary sector and includes input from the private sector contractors who manage the main asylum based services. They come together to provide strategic direction and insight on asylum and refugee related issues. The Partnership also seeks to provide policy and integration support and guidance on wider migration issues. We are members of its Asylum & Migration Stakeholder Group, its Migrant Health & Wellbeing Subgroup, its VCS Forum and we Co-Chair its Move On & Economic Inclusion Subgroup.

We maintain close working relations with, amongst others, the Home Office, DWP, Jobcentre Plus, Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Healthwatch teams, the region's three police forces and offices of Police & Crime Commissioners, the Crown Prosecution Service, and with the region's five Universities.

Private Sector relations:

We aim to contribute to the work of the two Local Enterprise Partnerships serving the North East region, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and Tees Valley Unlimited. As they have responsibility for developing a strategy for economic growth, our aim is to support them to produce economic growth strategies that are inclusive of the refugee community.

Through the North East Migration Partnership we also engage with G4S who deliver the COMPASS (asylum seeker accommodation) contract in the North East through their sub-contractor, Jomast. Our aim is to support the highest standards of contract delivery through brokering relations, and enabling the consumer voice to inform service delivery.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

We have a range of customised Employment and Health & Safety policies and procedures created by professional Employment Law and Health & Safety specialists to ensure the organisation operates according to legislation and quality management standards.

The senior staff member is responsible for the overall day to day financial management and for financial projections for the organisation as a whole and for reporting this to the Treasurer and Trustees so that they can ensure the organisation remains within its financial capacity, and enables forward planning. We outsource some accounting functions to Read Milburn & Co.

The community we serve and volunteers who participate in our work are exceptional in that many are not entitled to work, receive support on a no-cash basis only, or have no recourse to any public funds. They therefore have no cash to purchase travel tickets to participate in activities or to purchase childcare. Consequently we have a high level of petty cash transactions to refund out of pocket expenses. We have a robust petty cash recording and accounting system to manage this.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The objects of the Association are the advancement of education and the relief of poverty, distress and sickness amongst Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the North East of England and to that end to provide a mechanism for hearing the voice of Asylum Seekers and Refugees by bringing together in council representatives of Refugee Communities working in the area of benefit.

The organisation enables its members' to collate their expert knowledge and evidence about the distinct and unique barriers and inequality experienced by asylum seekers and refugees living in the region. It then empowers them to present the authentic, collective advocate voice directly to decision makers to inform the development of evidence-based Policy and Practice with the aim of promoting the settlement and integration of all asylum seekers and refugees living in the region.

We are the only regional organisation in the refugee supporting sector that advocates for improvement in policy and practice as a core aim of the organisation rather than as an add on.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Significant activities

1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015

Our objectives have been:

That more refugees and asylum seekers living in the region have access to local services and support that help them achieve economic inclusion, better health and wellbeing, more resilient families, and greater safety within the neighbourhoods they live in.

That those services deliver support that responds to the specific and additional needs and barriers that the community faces, so that they benefit from them on an equal basis to all local residents.

That more members are able to advocate effectively for change, both in their own lives and those of the community they support.

That our work will address systemic, root causes of the distinctive and unique needs and barriers faced the asylum seekers and refugees and identify what works best, so that it impacts positively on the lives of the whole community of asylum seekers and refugees living in the region.

Improvement in the quality of life of those living in the region who are awaiting a decision on their asylum case, or who have had their cases refused, whose lives are framed and impacted by specific asylum policy and contracted services.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

Our organisation delivers development, empowerment and advocacy support to the region's community of refugees and asylum seekers, who arrived in need of sanctuary. This direct beneficiary community is a community of experience rather than identity. It contains great diversity in terms of nationality, ethnicity, background and faith. However, they all share additional and specific needs arising from their experience of exile and status as asylum seekers and refugees, and face significant and multiple disadvantages, inequalities and social and economic exclusion. The organisation unites refugee communities from all continents, South America, Middle East, Africa, South East Asia and Eastern Europe in collective action to gain a greater influence on Policy and Practice, in the interests of all refugees and asylum seekers in the North East region. Our work enables members to develop advocacy skills, build and widen networks and engage with a whole range of agencies and local and regional engagement platforms relating to economic inclusion, better health and wellbeing, and greater safety within the neighbourhoods they live in. By hearing the authentic voiced experience of the community, that reflects what is shared rather than what is personal and individual, policy makers and local service providers can improve access routes and deliver support that responds to the specific and additional needs and barriers that this community faces, so that they benefit from those services and opportunities on an equal basis to all local residents.

We also support refugee-led community organisations and initiatives to access appropriate development and capacity building support and funding to enable them to provide a range of unique support actions and solutions to the multiple needs of their communities, particularly in the areas of health, community safety, education, training and employment.

Our founding aim is for the region's community of refugees and asylum seekers to strategically use their Collective Voice to influence policy and practice that are the systemic causes of the poverty, disadvantage and exclusion they experience in their daily lives. We deliver this Social Justice agenda through an empowering development practice that aims to be transformative on two levels: the first in that the change it effects in policy and practice will promote the opportunity of all Refugees and Asylum seekers to be full, equal and active citizens, participating in and contributing equally to the social, economic, political and cultural life of the region; the second is that by genuinely being part of the process through which those changes are brought about, our members gain the essential knowledge, skills, networks and confidence to be active agents in further change.

Overcoming marginalisation and exclusion within the region, and promoting the ability of the community of refugees to participate in and contribute to the social, cultural and economic wealth of the region on an equal basis, will be in the interest of the whole regional community.

The achievements of the charity have been recognised through several awards: 'Community Organisation of the Year' award at the Tees Valley BME Achievement Awards 2012 and 'Outstanding small/medium organisation' at the North East Voluntary & Community Sector Awards 2013.

Volunteers

The Charity's Board of Trustees are all themselves volunteers and dedicate many hours annually to their Governance and representational roles. Our Collective Action is lead by key volunteers from across the membership who constitute our issue based Working Groups. Other volunteers offer their specific skills for particular activities, such as IT work and video production. The success of the Charity depends on the degree of voluntary participation and contribution of the membership in the range of activities it organises.

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

1st August 2014 - 31st July 2015

1. Our work to promote equality of access to and outcomes from local services via our issue based Working Groups

In this period a total of 68 people from 34 RCOs and 22 countries of origin worked together to progress the aims of our Working Groups. Their collective voice was heard by 24 key target agencies and 1,024 students, representing the next generation of professional health, social work, and youth & community work practitioners.

a) Health & Wellbeing Working Group

Our Working Group members, comprising 24 volunteers from 15 RCOs, have been extremely active in this period. They delivered 39 upskilling workshops to a total of 959 students of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health studying at the Universities of Newcastle, Teesside and Sunderland so helping to develop competencies amongst the next generation of health professionals to understand and deliver to the distinctive health and wellbeing issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

They also organised engagement events with 6 Healthwatch teams from Stockton, from Middlesbrough, Sunderland, County Durham, Newcastle and Gateshead and NHS England as a route to inform commissioners of health services about issues of access, appropriate service, or gaps in current provision and recommend what would work better. Healthwatch teams value the opportunity to meet directly with sections of the local community who 'don't normally have their perspectives considered'. Alongside representation from local membership in those areas, our Working Group members presented key messages about health and wellbeing issues identified from the collective voice. We have begun to follow up on issues raised and actions recommended in these sessions. In collaboration with Sunderland Healthwatch a second meeting was held this time involving representatives from agencies with a key role on the issues that our members raised at the first event. This included the Clinical Commissioning Group, Sunderland Council Public Health Lead, Wellbeing Co-ordinators and Sunderland City Hospitals.

We arranged for 19 of our members to be given a guided visit of the Middlesbrough Lifestore visited Middlesbrough Health Life Store to learn about its role in connecting public with a great range of health and wellbeing services.

b) Stronger Families Working Group

Our team of 5 dedicated volunteers delivered 3 upskilling workshops to 68 students, the next generation of Social Workers and Youth & Community Work professionals currently studying at postgraduate and undergraduate level at the Universities of Sunderland and Durham. These workshops are designed by our Working Groups to deliver key messages about the unique experiences and context of Asylum Seekers and Refugees that give rise to distinctive challenges faced by young people, parents and families and particular challenges of community based action and community leadership. The sessions are designed to go beyond 'awareness raising' as students are asked to reflect on how the knowledge gained relates directly to their professional practice. This practical link has been recognised and commented upon by University teaching staff as going beyond 'personal stories' presented by guest speakers from other sections of the community and so providing additional professional learning value.

As part of our on-going work with Sunderland University helping to broaden the experience, understanding and skills of Social Work students to work with refugees and asylum seeker families, the University invited our Working Group members to join the panel interviewing applicants for the BA Social Work course. 3 members took part in the admissions process through February to April and received Continuing Professional Development certificates.

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

Our Working Group also continued to develop their evidence base and to organised training for our membership to help them understand the legal and cultural practices around parenting in the UK, and people's rights to access support and representation if involved with Social Services. They worked collaboratively with the Children's Society to identify recurring issues, organised a training workshop for RCOs with Northumbria University's School of Law, and two further training workshops for RCOs delivered pro bono by P J Watsons Solicitors of Middlesbrough to deliver two training workshops for RCOs to identify pathways to prevent unnecessary escalation of issues and for resolution of cases where children may be taken into care.

c) Community Safety Working Group

In April two members of our Community Safety Working Group delivered presentations at a regional seminar organised by the TUC and VONNE on the theme of 'Why is Hate Crime on the Rise? Is Austerity to blame?' The conference was attended by Trade Unionists, Police, representatives from the Disability and LGBT community, and other agencies with a role in tackling the causes of and response to hate crime. Workshops identified some practical actions to inform an action plan.

d) Impact

Written feedback forms are collected from all students and almost all evidence key learning gained and reflection on how this will inform their professional practice. All 4 universities have requested we repeat the sessions to their next year intakes.

We will trace how the issues and recommendations made by our Working Groups in engagement events inform local and regional strategies and commissioning.

This work not only enables the collective voice of our members to influence decision makers and inform the development of strategies and commissioning of services, but it is also empowering our Working Group members as advocates, both in their own lives and for their community, and helping them progress their own career pathways. Our Working Group members complete written self-assessment forms.

Examples include:

'My self-confidence has continued to grow since I became a member of the Working Group. My communication skills have improved and now I can confidently contribute at meetings because I'm used to presenting at Universities and because I have a deeper understanding of the issues affecting the refugee communities and more importantly I now know how the system works here.'

'My deeper understanding of how to access health care through the Health Working Group has now helped me to support my community to exercise their right to use the HC2 certificate to claim travel costs to hospital. They did not know about this before. I have also told my community about their rights to change GPs and how to register complaints'.

'I gained wider knowledge of the issues I'll be working with and I stated my experience at the interview and I believe it immensely contributed to me getting a job'.

'Being involved in the Social Work Interview Panel at Sunderland University also raised my confidence and enabled me to prepare for my interview too'.

The process has also helped fill knowledge gaps and build awareness within our Working Group members own communities, as well as broker connections to a wider range of services and support:

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

'The biggest impact we've made in the community is about healthy lifestyles because we've explained in our own way the dangers of salt, sugar and oily foods. It is astonishing to learn that generally speaking sugar taken in teas has gone down and it is no longer a surprise to hear someone from our community saying "no sugar please". The message on healthy lifestyle has led to many of our members now taking part in exercises at local gyms and is now fashionable to talk about where one goes for gym'.

2. Our work to enable, facilitate and mobilise the advocate voice of the region's voluntary & community sector to engage with the regional migration stakeholder arrangements and influence its work, and to contribute to lobbying and advocacy taking place at the national level.

a) Regional Move on & Economic Inclusion Subgroup

We Co-ordinated and Co-chaired three further meetings of the Regional Migrant Economic Inclusion Subgroup in October, January and May. We have continued to drive this work forwards after the closure of the North East Strategic Migration Partnership in 2012. In May this Subgroup was officially incorporated into the newly established North East Migration Partnership, created through an enabling grant from the Home Office in late 2014. It is now one of the Partnership's 3 regional Subgroups and so benefits from their administrative capacity, greater co-ordinated engagement of Local Authorities across the region, and its formal links with the Home Office and Strategic Migration Partnerships in other parts of the UK for sharing and exchange of learning. Its focus is to 'improve move on services and promote economic inclusion for Asylum Seekers and Refugees' but it will continue to incorporate a wider remit of addressing issues affecting EU migrants.

During this period 30 agencies have been active participants in the subgroup meetings and contributors to current ongoing work to progress specific practical actions to close the gap which happens at transition from Home Office support to mainstream benefits after a grant of leave to remain, which results in many experiencing a period of unnecessary destitution. All the key players in the process of Move On attend, being representatives from the DWP, Jobcentre Plus, HMRC, Local Authorities, Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Housing, and Voluntary & Community Sector organisations. The Subgroups evidence of recurring issues has been fed by the DWP up to national level and contributed to the creation of a new Guidance letter jointly produced by the Home Office and DWP which since July 2015 has been issued nationally to all new status refugees with their grant of leave letter. HMRC are using our evidence on delays to start up of tax credits and child benefits payments to identify process improvements and explore replicating fast track routes used for the Gateway and SVPR schemes. At a regional level, the Subgroup is working with the JCP to clarify local processes, improve compliance and promote consistency of practice across the local Job Centres. The DWPs own intranet guidance to JCP staff has also been refreshed.

b) North East Migration Partnership

NEMP was created in late 2014 under an enabling grant from the Home Office. The Partnership is a local authority led collaboration of organisations across the statutory and voluntary sector and includes input from the private sector contractors who manage the main asylum based services. They come together to provide strategic direction and insight on asylum and refugee related issues. Since its start up we have worked closely with its newly appointed Partnership Manager to design a consultation process for the region's RCOs and refugee assisting voluntary and community sector and those working with migrants from the EEA to identify what they considered to be the key issues facing asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers, refugees and EU migrants in the region, and to recommend practical actions and 'quick wins' to improve them. The aim was for their recommendations to inform the development of the Partnership's first Work Programme. In January 2015 we send a Survey to 128 VCS agencies across the region playing a role in migration. We collated their responses and worked with NEMP to design an interactive workshop for the region's VCS in February. 26 organisations participated, half from our membership, and worked with to refine, add to and validate the findings in discussion with representatives from the Home Office. Their recommendations were then shared with a workshop held in March for representatives from the region's public sector.

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

NEMP held its inaugural meeting in May 2015 where it presented its first Work Programme. 30 of the 45 issues and actions listed within the work programme match recommendations made by the VCS through the regional survey and workshop.

Our organisation, as the collective 'consumer' voice of asylum seekers and refugees, is one of two VCS agencies represented in the Partnership's Asylum & Migration Stakeholder Group whose remit is to provide a strategic leadership, advisory and coordination functions for asylum and refugee groups in the context of wider migration for the region. The group comprises senior representatives from each of the region's local authorities, from the Police and Health, and the Home Office and their contractors. We are also a member of the Partnership's Regional Migrant Health & Wellbeing Subgroup and we are currently supporting NEMP to develop draft terms of reference for its proposed VCS Forum, to be inclusive of the region's refugee and migrant led and assisting VCS.

We also continue to contribute local operational issues and examples of successful practice to the 7 local multi-agency management groups chaired by Jomast and held bi-monthly across the region and to the City of Sanctuary groups that have established over the last year.

c) Immigration Detention

We mobilised a regional response in support of the national campaign to reform immigration detention in the UK. In September 2014 we worked with national campaign coalition Detention Forum and national campaign group Detention Action to organise two sub-regional 'hearings' to record the testimony of people with first-hand experience of immigration detention. Their testimony was collated into the region's submission to the first ever All Party Parliamentary Inquiry on the use of Immigration Detention in the UK. In June 2015, to mark Refugee Week, we organised a Public regional event where speakers from the national campaign organisations presented the findings of the Parliamentary Inquiry and helped identify practical actions through which our region's VCS can help ensure the report's recommendations for reform are implemented. Workshops were also held for participants to share their experience of what works in terms of practical support for those in detention or at risk of detention.

d) Home Office

In November 2014 we held a members' meeting with representatives from the Home office and Migrant Help, who responded to issues members' raised about delays in Active review, the reporting process, case work and the COMPASS contract and clarified information about Home Office policy and practice.

e) CARA (Council for At-risk Academics)

In May 2015 we made presentations at CARA's which brought together the five North East universities alongside other local organisations working to fulfil similar aims. We helped identify pathways that need to be developed for securing engagement of asylum-seeking academics dispersed to the North East within CARA's scope.

3. Developing social media tools to support our advocacy work

We launched our Facebook in September 2014. It provides a new external window about our work which we hope will increase knowledge and attract interest from both agencies and potential new members. There is an internal membership area and pages for each of our Working Groups where they can discuss issues and share and collect more evidence from across the membership and share knowledge with them.

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

4. Completion of our 'Missing Link' project

'The Missing Link' project continued to unlock the entrepreneurial ambitions of our women members and link them up to business support and networks across the region, supported by a grant from The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) as part of the Group's Inspiring Enterprise initiative. It aimed to enable these women to explore and realise their ideas by addressing knowledge gaps in the UK context and bridging the gap between them and mainstream providers of business support and enterprise networks across the region.

The programme involved 58 women from 23 member groups, from 18 countries of origin across the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Arranged as two cohorts, they took part in a total of 36 different project activities over the 12 month period incorporating workshops and action learning sets delivered by expert trainers from DEAL associates, and sessions with guest speakers corresponding to areas of business knowledge and services of specific interest to the participants. Areas of business interest explored included fashion design, crafts, food (catering, retail and import), personal care, beauty, clothing (retail and recycling), PR, travel, cleaning, funeral arrangements, and supported housing. 4 open workshops were held in September and October 2014. The first on the theme of Food had guest speakers from local authorities and colleges who spoke about food health and hygiene in the UK, while people already running catering businesses spoke about their personal learning journeys and do and don'ts. Speakers UK Trade & Industry helped participants explore issues around and support for International Trade. Local entrepreneurs gave practical examples of how they use social media as a business tool, while speakers from local business clubs and networks helped participants understand they don't need to go it alone. The final activity was a conference held in November 2014 with panellists helping participants identify progression paths for themselves and their business idea and an opportunity to celebrate their learning journeys as aspiring entrepreneurs. The event was hosted by Teesside University at its Centre for Enterprise with certificates of achievement awarded by Kiersten Avery, Assistant Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Business and Law.

Participant evaluation showed the project had provided them with much greater technical knowledge of business start-up in the UK, connections made, confidence boosted, business knowledge increased and understanding of the range of mainstream business support available. Some participants have started their business; others are ready to start subject to securing leave to remain in the UK. Others have more realistic ideas than when they started the project and a much better plan for turning those ideas into businesses. The Project report entitled 'Lessons Learned and Guidance for Those Working with the Refugee Community in the Area of Business Start-Up' produced in March 2015 aimed to provide an overview of the trainers' experiences, as business support professionals with 25 years experience each, in addressing the distinctive knowledge gaps and barriers facing refugee entrepreneurs. The report was designed as a guide to 'both inspire others in the business support world and provide some practical tools and techniques that will better enable potential entrepreneurs from the refugee community to be able to realize their potential and make a positive economic contribution to their new home in the UK'.

5. Promoting inclusion of newly emerging &/or arriving groups within our collective work and activities of the organisation

In this period we have helped 5 new RCOs to develop and 25 people, from 10 countries of origin, have been newly involved in our collective work.

We also arranged peer learning visits for 7 RCOs to learn from other RCOs across the region about their experience of developing specific activities and organisational growth.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

We are mindful of challenges our organisation faces in terms of sustainability particularly in the current environment. Employment contracts relate directly to project funding secured and the tenancy on both our offices has been negotiated for short notice. Where we receive grant income for a year in advance we seek the best no risk investment routes in order to provide interest on our income as a source of adding to our reserves. Whenever possible we operate a reserves policy of maintaining reserves at 3 months full operational costs.

Principal funding sources

Funding for the organisation's programmes is derived from grant funding, the grants being restricted funds. Core costs are provided from project management fees attached to each grant.

In this reporting period we completed delivery, in March 2015, of our 'Missing Link' project supported by a 1 year grant from The Royal Bank of Scotland as part of the Group's Inspiring Enterprise initiative. And in June 2015 we completed a 3 year grant from Millfield House Foundation for policy focused work.

We continued delivery of programmes supported by grant funding from the Northern Rock Foundation for our Training & Development programme phase 2, and from the Community Foundation for Northumberland, Tyne & Wear for developing social media tools to support our advocacy work.

We received 3 new grants in this period: In January 2015 we began a new 2 year project funded Northern Rock Foundation to facilitate and enable the advocate voice of the region's voluntary and community sector to inform the work of the region's newly developing Migration Partnership and other relevant policy and practice platforms relating to RAS settlement and integration, receiving £39,324 from the for the first year of the programme. We also received a Learning Support grant of £1,550 from Northern Rock Foundation for exploring models of collaborative and co-ordinated working. In July 2015 we became a Strategic Partner organisation of the Millfield House Foundation, under which our strategic development work and core costs will be supported by an annual grant of £40,000, initially for 3 years.

We also secured £4,838 in 'throughput' whereby we successfully arranged to recover direct costs associated with delivery of upskilling workshops with Universities and engagement events with external agencies.

The organisation's policy on fundraising is to avoid wherever possible applying to grants programmes that are either accessible to or most used by our member organisations as we work to support their own development.

Financial position

Incoming resources in the year were £139,448 of this £139,239 related to project restricted activities.

There was a surplus of £9,861 in the year. At 31 July 2015 total reserves were £129,659 of which £30,631 represented unrestricted funds.

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016

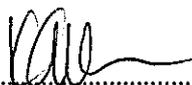
The change we aim to make:

- a) That more refugees and asylum seekers living in the region have access to services and support that help them achieve economic inclusion, better health and wellbeing, more resilient families, and greater safety within the neighbourhoods they live in
- b) That those services deliver support that responds to the specific and additional needs and barriers that the community faces, so that they benefit from them on an equal basis to all local residents
- c) That more members are able to advocate effectively for change, both in their own lives and those of the community they support
- d) That our work will address systemic, root causes of the specific and additional needs and barriers faced by asylum seekers and refugees and identify what works best, so that it impacts positively on the lives of the whole community of asylum seekers and refugees living in the region
- e) Improvement in the quality of life of those living in the region who are awaiting a decision on their asylum case, or who have had their cases refused, whose lives are framed and impacted by specific asylum policy and contracted services.

To achieve this change, we will deliver the following activities:

- a) Support our Working Groups on Health & Wellbeing, on Stronger Families and on Community Safety to further develop their shared evidence base and to engage their collective advocate voice at appropriate platforms or through effective engagement routes to influence decision makers
- b) Enable and facilitate the advocate voice of voluntary & community sector to engage with the regional migration stakeholder arrangements via the North East Migration Partnership and influence its work, and to contribute to lobbying and advocacy taking place at the national level
- c) Co-ordinate and Co-Chair the North East Migration Partnership's Move on & Economic Inclusion Subgroup to identify and drive forward practical actions that will close the transition gap at Move on and address barriers to employment
- d) Support the emergence of self-organising initiatives within newly arriving communities and newly establishing community groups from the asylum and refugee community and promote their inclusion within the charity
- e) Where necessary secure additional resources to support our capacity to deliver these activities

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 10th Dec 2015 and signed on its behalf by:


.....

K K Harrison - Trustee

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2015 set out on pages fifteen to twenty two.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statements below.

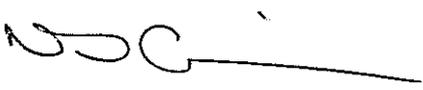
Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


Nick Liley FCA
Read, Milburn & Co
North Shields

Date: 11th December 2015

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2015 Total funds £	2014 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from charitable activities	2				
Grant income		-	137,239	137,239	177,762
Other incoming resources		209	2,000	2,209	2,300
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Charitable activities	3				
Salaries and NIC		-	83,572	83,572	87,645
General running expenses		17	4,627	4,644	6,355
Training staff and volunteers		-	-	-	185
Trainer travel		-	450	450	1,350
Staff travel		-	1,243	1,243	2,667
Participants costs		-	7,538	7,538	13,665
Training, learning, dissemination		-	13,294	13,294	16,927
Management costs		-	-	-	13,657
Accommodation		-	12,457	12,457	12,177
Insurance and accountancy		-	628	628	602
ICT support		-	-	-	1,452
Consultancy and advice		-	2,198	2,198	2,593
Capital costs		-	-	-	231
Governance costs	5	-	3,563	3,563	4,804
Total resources expended		17	129,570	129,587	164,310
NET INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS					
		192	9,669	9,861	15,752
Gross transfers between funds	12	17	(17)	-	-
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources		209	9,652	9,861	15,752
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		30,422	89,376	119,798	104,046
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		30,631	99,028	129,659	119,798

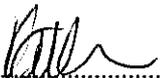
The notes form part of these financial statements

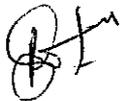
REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

**BALANCE SHEET
AT 31 JULY 2015**

	Notes	2015 £	2014 £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	9	2,284	1,625
Cash at bank and in hand		129,457	120,947
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		131,741	122,572
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(2,082)	(2,774)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		129,659	119,798
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			
		129,659	119,798
NET ASSETS			
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
FUNDS	12		
Unrestricted funds		30,631	30,422
Restricted funds		99,028	89,376
		<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 10th Dec 2015 and were signed on its behalf by:


.....
K K Harrison -Trustee


.....
P Svotwa -Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008), the Charities Act 2011 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings	- 25% on cost
Computer equipment	- 33% on cost

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2015	2014
	Grant income	Total
	£	£
Northern Rock Foundation	80,874	60,425
Millfield House Foundation	56,365	31,775
Big Lottery Fund	-	34,843
Royal Bank of Scotland	-	47,679
Community Foundation	-	3,040
	<u>137,239</u>	<u>177,762</u>

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015

3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct costs	Support costs (See note 4)	Totals
	£	£	£
Salaries and NIC	83,572	-	83,572
Trainer travel	450	-	450
Staff travel	1,243	-	1,243
Participants costs	7,538	-	7,538
Training, learning, dissemination	13,294	-	13,294
General running expenses	-	4,644	4,644
Accommodation	-	12,457	12,457
Insurance and accountancy	-	628	628
Consultancy and advice	-	2,198	2,198
	<u>106,097</u>	<u>19,927</u>	<u>126,024</u>

4. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management £
General running expenses	4,644
Accommodation	12,457
Insurance and accountancy	628
Consultancy and advice	2,198
	<u>19,927</u>

5. GOVERNANCE COSTS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2015 Total funds £	2014 Total funds £
Trustees' expenses	-	851	851	624
Accountancy charges	-	2,580	2,580	3,060
Payroll charges	-	132	132	190
Book-keeping charges	-	-	-	930
	<u>-</u>	<u>3,563</u>	<u>3,563</u>	<u>4,804</u>

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015

6. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 July 2015 nor for the year ended 31 July 2014.

Trustees' expenses

	2015	2014
	£	£
Trustees' expenses	851	624

7. STAFF COSTS

	2015	2014
	£	£
Wages and salaries	75,380	92,068
Social security costs	8,192	9,234
	<u>83,572</u>	<u>101,302</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2015	2014
Project	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015	<u>1,819</u>	<u>9,983</u>	<u>11,802</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015	<u>1,819</u>	<u>9,983</u>	<u>11,802</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 July 2015	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 July 2014	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015**

9. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2015	2014
	£	£
Other debtors	2,284	1,625

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2015	2014
	£	£
Other creditors	2,082	2,774

11. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2015 Total funds £	2014 Total funds £
Current assets	30,745	100,996	131,741	122,572
Current liabilities	(114)	(1,968)	(2,082)	(2,774)
	<u>30,631</u>	<u>99,028</u>	<u>129,659</u>	<u>119,798</u>

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015**

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/8/14 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/7/15 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	30,422	192	17	30,631
Restricted funds				
Millfield House Foundation	18,986	(18,977)	(9)	-
NRF-support for community action programme	8,842	(381)	-	8,461
NRF-training and development	38,745	(15,026)	-	23,719
NRF-communication strategy	1,048	-	-	1,048
RBS-the missing link	18,715	(18,707)	(8)	-
Community Foundation-website social media project	3,040	(1,638)	-	1,402
NRF-learning support	-	1,050	-	1,050
NRF-enabling the advocate voice	-	26,677	-	26,677
MHF-strategic partners	-	36,671	-	36,671
	<u>89,376</u>	<u>9,669</u>	<u>(17)</u>	<u>99,028</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>119,798</u>	<u>9,861</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>129,659</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	209	(17)	192
Restricted funds			
Millfield House Foundation	16,365	(35,342)	(18,977)
NRF-training and development	42,000	(57,026)	(15,026)
RBS-the missing link	-	(18,707)	(18,707)
Community Foundation-website social media project	-	(1,638)	(1,638)
NRF-learning support	1,550	(500)	1,050
NRF-enabling the advocate voice	39,324	(12,647)	26,677
MHF-strategic partners	40,000	(3,329)	36,671
NRF-support for community action programme	-	(381)	(381)
	<u>139,239</u>	<u>(129,570)</u>	<u>9,669</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>139,448</u>	<u>(129,587)</u>	<u>9,861</u>

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015**

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Transfers between funds

The transfers are of any remaining balances on the completion of the relevant project.

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015

	2015 £	2014 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Incoming resources from charitable activities		
Northern Rock Foundation	80,874	60,425
Millfield House Foundation	56,365	31,775
Big Lottery Fund	-	34,843
Royal Bank of Scotland	-	47,679
Community Foundation	-	3,040
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	137,239	177,762
Other incoming resources		
Other income	2,209	2,300
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total incoming resources	139,448	180,062
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Charitable activities		
Wages	75,380	80,224
Social security	8,192	7,421
Staff training	-	185
Staff travel	1,243	2,667
Participants costs	7,538	13,665
Training	10,920	12,639
Learning exchange	-	870
Meetings	2,374	3,418
Trainer travel	450	1,350
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	106,097	122,439
Governance costs		
Trustees' expenses	851	624
Accountancy charges	2,580	3,060
Payroll charges	132	190
Book-keeping charges	-	930
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,563	4,804
Support costs		

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

REGIONAL REFUGEE FORUM NORTH EAST

**DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2015**

	2015	2014
	£	£
Management		
Chief officer's salary	-	11,844
Chief officer-social security	-	1,813
Rent and utilities	12,457	12,177
Insurance	628	602
Telephone and internet charges	2,363	3,311
Stationery and postage	1,224	2,129
Cleaning and office sundries	753	753
Repairs and equipment	304	45
Computer consumables	-	117
ICT support	-	1,452
Professional charges	2,198	2,593
Computer equipment	-	231
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	19,927	37,067
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total resources expended	129,587	164,310
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net income	9,861	15,752
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

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